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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - NATO Expansion
PARIS - Tuesday, May 02, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

NATO Expansion

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Domestic stories dominate front pages, editorials and a majority of today's inside coverage. The political/financial scandal Clearstream is today's lead story, with two of the main players, PM Villepin and Interior Minister Sarkozy prominently featured. PM Villepin, who is suspected by Liberation of having triggered the investigation into Sarkozy's alleged financial wrong doings, headlines: "The Ten Questions He Can No Longer Elude." Added to the PM's recent difficulties -the CPE, social unrest-, the poll conducted by Liberation and featured on its front page concludes: "Only 20% of Respondents Support Villepin." Liberation's attacks include Interior Minister Sarkozy, as illustrated in its editorial: "What other government has in less than a year accumulated such trophies as the CPE, social unrest and financial shenanigans at the highest level of the state? Such are the astounding results of the Villepin-Sarkozy duo." Le Figaro's front page carries an interview with General Rondot, who categorically denies being asked by Villepin to investigate Sarkozy or other politicians.

Today's second lead story involves Sarkozy's 'selected' immigration policy plan. In Le Figaro, the editorial asks: "Do we lack in France the mechanism that helps integrate our immigrants, who are the result of so many years of uncontrolled immigration? . The continued influx of unskilled migrants in a country undermined by unemployment weighs heavily on French society, while it condemns the immigrants themselves to poverty. While nothing will replace growth in order to help integration, Sarkozy's immigration policy has the merit of finally saying that fighting clandestine immigration is not enough. Is it too much to ask a prospective immigrant to abide by our laws and learn to speak French? Sarkozy's immigration policy is not, as the Socialists and the Clergy are saying, useless and dangerous."

All media, including the electronic media, carry the story of "striking Latinos" on May 1st to protest the new U.S. law on illegal immigration. "The U.S. Deprived of Its Immigrants" titles Liberation, while Le Figaro's article is entitled: "Latinos, a Boycott to Hurt the U.S. Where it Counts: the Pocketbook." The editorial in La Croix, although devoted to French immigration, begins thus: "Proof by contradiction. In order for their place in American society to be asserted, immigrants of Hispanic origin yesterday had to refrain from working or consuming to shed light on their presence and usefulness." Le Parisien reports that the President's "proposed immigration law carries with it a major political stumbling block: should the 12 million illegal immigrants who live and work in the U.S., representing 5% of the population, be amnestied?"

Le Figaro carries a report on "NATO's proposed globalization" and those who are reluctant to adhere to the U.S. proposal. (See Part C)

Catholic La Croix carries a profile of Ann Wright, "A Diplomat Against the War in Iraq." Gilles Biassette reports on the "diplomat who resigned to protest Washington's foreign policy." and on Saturday's protest March in New York. "For years she traveled the world to serve her country. At the end of 2001 she was posted in Afghanistan where she was preparing for the reopening of the U.S. Embassy. But a few months later she threw in the towel. For the first time she did not feel like representing her country. In her letter to her boss, Colin Powell, she says: 'I believe that this administration's policy is making the world more dangerous, not safer.' Three years later, her vision has not changed. In her view, this war is meant to distract America from what should really be its goal:

dealing with international terrorism."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

NATO's Globalization

"NATO's Globalization: Few Takers"

Arnaud de la Grange in right-of-center Le Figaro (05/02):
"The ambitions of the Americans for NATO, an Alliance that would spread from Vancouver to Tasmania, has no limits. This idea was debated in Bulgaria but was finally received with lukewarm enthusiasm, including from decidedly pro-Atlanticists. For American strategists, and for NATO's Secretary General, the reasoning is simple: new threats

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have become global and the means to deal with them must follow. But NATO's Jaap de Hoop Scheffer was careful to distinguish between a 'global alliance' and an 'alliance with global partners.' America's idea is to establish a partnership with nations which participate in operations, although they are not in the ranks to become NATO members. In Asia, this could include Japan or Australia. But says a diplomat: 'Such a step could worry China and Russia. it could also dilute and weaken the Alliance.' For months, the debate has dealt with NATO's extension, both geographical and thematic. The Alliance is playing a civilian role in Afghanistan, a humanitarian one in Pakistan and is involved in a political dialogue with Gulf States and the Maghreb. In the Middle East, Darfur and Africa, it is upstaging the EU. In Sofia, new members such as Poland and Latvia were reserved about the plan for 'global' partners, which could marginalize them. 'Old members' like Spain or Portugal, feel that NATO is already overwhelmed with its nearby environment. Others like the Netherlands are very keen to keep the specific nature of the original transatlantic relationship. In short, the French are not the only ones to be concerned about NATO's involvement every which way."

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